

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A ferrule, comprising:  
a ferrule body defining a forward end, an opposed rearward end, and at  
least one passageway extending between the forward end and the rearward end;  
and  
a fiber optic indicia formed on a predetermined portion of a surface of the  
ferrule, wherein the fiber optic indicia comprises a predetermined pattern  
associated with data about the fiber optic assembly, wherein the data comprises at  
least one of an optical characteristic and a product characteristic.
2. The ferrule of claim 1, wherein the predetermined portion is located on the end  
face of the ferrule.
3. The ferrule of claim 1, wherein the predetermined portion is located near the  
forward end of the ferrule body.
4. The ferrule of claim 1, wherein the at least one passageway comprises at least one  
passageway having a respective opening at the forward end.
5. The ferrule of claim 4, wherein the predetermined portion is located within at  
least about 150 microns from the opening of the at least one passageway at the forward  
end.
6. The ferrule of claim 1, wherein the ferrule body further comprises:  
an optical fiber extending at least partially through the at least one  
passageway such that an end portion of the optical fiber is exposed at an end face  
of the forward end of the ferrule.

7. The ferrule of claim 6, wherein the predetermined portion is located on the optical fiber exposed at the end face of the forward end.

8. The ferrule of claim 1, wherein the ferrule is made from at least one of the following materials:

metal;  
polymer;  
plastic;  
ceramic;  
glass; and  
crystal.

9. A method of marking a component of a fiber optic assembly, comprising:  
establishing a predetermined pattern of a fiber optic indicia, wherein the fiber optic indicia is associated with information about the fiber optic assembly;  
providing the component for marking;  
preparing a predetermined portion of a surface of the component for marking; and  
marking the predetermined portion of the surface in accordance with the predetermined pattern of the fiber optic indicia.

10. The method of claim 9, wherein the fiber optic indicia comprises at least one alphanumeric character.

11. The method of claim 9, wherein the fiber optic indicia comprises at least one symbol.

12. The method of claim 9, wherein marking the predetermined portion of the surface comprises laser etching the predetermined portion of the surface.

13. The method of claim 9, wherein marking the predetermined portion of the surface comprises applying color to the predetermined portion of the surface.

5 14. The method of claim 9, wherein marking the predetermined portion of the surface comprises differentiating planar colors of the fiber optic indicia and the predetermined portion of the surface.

10 15. The method of claim 9, wherein the fiber optic indicia comprises at least one of the following:

- a film;
- a substrate;
- a light sensitive indicia; and
- a magnetic substance.

15 16. The method of claim 9, wherein the information comprises data about at least one optical characteristic of the fiber optic assembly.

20 17. The method of claim 16, wherein the optical characteristic comprises at least one of the following:

- ferrule end face geometry measurement data;
- ferrule dimension data;
- end face fiber protrusion; and
- ferrule mode data.

25 18. The method of claim 16, wherein the optical characteristic comprises performance data of the fiber optic assembly.

19. The method of claim 18, wherein the performance data comprises at least one of the following:

attenuation data;  
back reflection data; and  
insertion loss data.

20. The method of claim 16, wherein the information comprises data about at least one product characteristic of the fiber optic assembly.

21. A method of marking a ferrule of a fiber optic assembly, comprising:  
establishing a predetermined pattern of a fiber optic indicia, wherein the fiber optic indicia is associated with information about the fiber optic assembly;  
providing the ferrule for marking;  
preparing a predetermined portion of a surface of the ferrule for marking;  
and  
marking the predetermined portion of the surface in accordance with the predetermined pattern of the fiber optic indicia.

22. The method of claim 21, further comprising:  
administering the fiber optic assembly in accordance with the fiber optic indicia.

23. The method of claim 21, further comprising:  
using the fiber optic indicia to select at least a pair of ferrules that maximize the transfer of a transmitted communication signal in a ferrule connection.

24. A method of identifying an optical characteristic of a fiber optic assembly, comprising the steps of:

aligning a fiber optic indicia formed on a predetermined portion of a surface of a component of the fiber optic assembly with a probe of an apparatus for reading the fiber optic indicia, wherein the fiber optic indicia is associated with information about the fiber optic assembly;

5                   reading the fiber optic indicia with the probe;

                  processing the fiber optic indicia read by the probe to interpret the optical characteristic of the fiber optic assembly, wherein processing comprises associating the information with at least one predetermined optical characteristic identifier of the fiber optic assembly.

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25.     A method of identifying a product characteristic of a fiber optic assembly, comprising the steps of:

                  aligning a fiber optic indicia formed on a predetermined portion of a surface of a component of the fiber optic assembly with a probe of an apparatus for reading the fiber optic indicia, wherein the fiber optic indicia is associated with information about the fiber optic assembly;

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                  reading the fiber optic indicia with the probe;

                  processing the fiber optic indicia read by the probe to interpret the product characteristic of the fiber optic assembly, wherein processing comprises associating the information with at least one predetermined product identifier of the fiber optic assembly.

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